Call from John Lindsay, Newsweek, evening 2/23/74 HW 2/24/74

lindsay phoned a little before 7. We spoke until abut 8:15. He seems to have recommended that Newsweek accept my offers and he said he was impressed with my performence, without saying it or putting it this way.

He began by laughing as he told me how he had enjoyed my letter, in part because what I said had to be true he found was, in part because I had correctly detected the "scientific" dishonesties of which he had proof in the Dektor Report and what he said was even worse, the Science article on it. (One that I remember is they used a Uher 4,000 instead of a 5,000, and while Dektor said it off the bat, Science buried it at the end.)

This gave me an opportunity to address, without making it specific, what I think is the major problem, any major element of the media acknowledging that an old chicken farmer can do and does regularly what the combined brains it has bought can not and does not.

Early he said he understood that Kalmbach is copping a plea, one count. I think he said it will be Monday. We chatted about that after I laughed and said Ehrlichman had immediately established a business in which he will not need a lawyer's license. He had notice that, too, as well as the fact that he had seen no reporting of it. (When it seemed not inadvisable I asked "have you seen that reported." By the end of our conversation there were a number of these items.)

Elfin was noncommittal but the proposal was forwarded to New York Thursday. They did meet Tuesday as planned last Saturday but didn't have time. He think Elfin took no position in order to escape any responsibility. With the future of the valuable properties in jeopardy, this is the loyal, dedicated position - protect yourself.

When we had talked about the Dektor report for a while I told him that this is the kind of thing about which I have made records and offered the one I had made. I told him that over and above all he had learned there was an irremedial flaw in the Dektor and WH approach that could not be answered. He recalled that the moment Rose Mary got the machine she used it and this happened. Then I went into the Alsop attack and showed that it was based on a lie, that the bridge had been thrown away. It can be replaced at any time. But, I said, the alteration in the electrical components was not by the panel, it was earlier and not reported in any of the Dektor stories: by Steve Bull. He then remembereed it. I asked, "Is this a story?" Affirmed. "Have you seen it reported anywhere?" No.

I told him that I hoped he realized I was giving him/them every possible chance to test and evaluate me and what I do in what I did and said, to the degree that seemed safe enough, and I realized that if he were not honorable it would be a loss. He said he had seen this. I said I had taken major aspects of the story and done two things: told him what hd been missed and what it was that was missed, and that these were current stories. He again agreed. (Because he did not react, I supposed they did not go for the Archives deal story.) On the Archives gift I told him that I had not only told him what the story was but where he could get the proof, even to phone numbers. He laughed and agreed. I then said that if he didn't want to use the phone, he could come here and find it in my filed, that I knew what the answers were because I had them. He said he would like to come up but would prefer auspices and I did not press it.

My point was to try to avoid seeming like a know-it-all while keeping feeding him a succession of new stories, in confidence, on the chance he is again consulted or goes in with an independent comment. So, I tried to explain how I had these things and that the nature of the work I had been doing for a decade took me into interesting by-ways. Here I illustrated with the Atlanta kidnapping, that I had anticipated a Stoner type had done it, that I had an extensive file to which he was welcome on Stoner/NSRP, how I knew him, etc., and the Minuteman stuff and how I got it and what I did with it. He laughed when I said that on returning it the FBI avoided the customary letter of thanks and the agent read what he had been told to say from a yellow pad (the Nixon touch?)

His own belief is that one man in the world only could have fucked up a simple job like that tape erasure, which I found amusing: The Leader of the Western World.

In discussing how so much was missed and how I picked up some of it I said that while I feared it would be misunderstood, the answers were relatively simple: the changed nature of the craft, particularly with the focus on TV, which can survive on leaks alone; the hangups of ownership/management; and ~~that~~ not that I was some kind of unique genius, which I am not, but that I am the beneficiary of experiences few if any reporters today have, as a enate investigator, as an intelligence analyst who has to learn to make spot analyses, and most of all, from a decade spent in investigating the assassinations and the official investigations of the assassinations. This apprenticeship is what makes it possible, not special or unusal talents, nor professional incompetence. While the reporting was good, it is fuction that there ever was any real investigation. What was called this was the diligent search for leaks.

I pointed out tha when he had said agency officials were going to be indicted I had given him three names, immediately. He recalled. I said that I had written this months ago and he could see it, that the case I had was public domain and had been missed.

When we were talking about the Dektor report I reminded him that he had promised to get the Haldeman memo on the 6/20/72 meeting. He said he had not forgotten and had asked the staffer who could, that he did not get there. I told him that my desire for it was not to find something new in it but the hope that I could give the media something from it. I told him that this was the one remaining record of that particular day. He correctly understood the significance of that day and conjectured accurately what had to have happened. My response was what would it be worth to prove it, to be able to give the minimum. His response was almost anything.

He tocked off reasons for believing that what Haldeman did was lay out the case that had to be covered up, which is right. His analysis of why this had to be the first time it could be done definitively was on target, and he had looked into this carefully enough to be able to tick off times and dates.

I told him I wasn't going to give everything away but I had and everybody missed- that in fact I had written that chapter months ago and he could see it- exactly what Haldeman knew by that 6/20 series of meetings. He said, Wow!" or something like that. I felt I had to explain this and I did by saying that because the nature of my work requires attention to minor detail and following things down with greater care because the work is so unwlecome, I have to trace such things. I added that I was close to unpublishable so that in recent years I hadswitched to making a comprehensible record, which did not mean including everything but including what was needed for understanding in the future. Thus I had studied something nobody else had.

(Note-Gray confirmation hearings, chapter This Is Your FBI, document Gray's 6/19/72 letter to Haldeman with enclosed summary of FBU work to that date.) I think it is quite a commentary on the press and the Congress that with the coverage those hearings got and with the knowledge of the Committee memmbers and more, the staff, that this remains entirely unreported when it can break the whole thing open.)

When we were talking about TV reporting and he was contemptuous I pointed out that they had a different scene, that the show biz aspect and the important to sources kept them going because their sources curried their favor and fed them. But as an example, in confidence, I tol him the story of my meeting with CBS' Plissner before I saw him last Saturday, of the call and my offer of the check. I did this by retracing what had happened. There was this $10,000 in $100 bills. Right. It was given to Hunt, but not those bills. A check. I had the check. It went to Bittman, from a lawyer he knew. He was impressed and believed this still to be a story. I then continued that there was more and nobody had thought to check it and without giving my sources, dod give the essence. I asked what happened to Dorothy Hunt's baggage? Had he seen anything on it. He hadn't. So I said that Kalbach's client, Dwight Chapin's employer-he laughed-had taken good care of it. They had kept it with solicitude and care until after the investigation was completed and they turned it over to Bittman's friend via a private investigator. I told him I had the date and the correspondence. And that there was every reason to believe that no officials had checked her luggage.

This got us into her and Hunt. He did not know that she had been CIA or how they had met or any of that. I told him. He did know that Buckley had been with Hunt in CIA and that

Buckley was the estate's executor. I told him that was the least of the story and as one sample went into the bit about the suppression of Hunt's declaration that his ambition was to be Castro's assassin through an agent and what Bukkley had done with this and then the history of its unpublishability, with names. He knows this is not the full story

After a series of these things, all in confidence, not to be followed on his own once I gave the leads, I said two things: this is how Nixon survived and I was giving him still more to test me and to indicate what I can deliver now. At about this point I said that the proof and the answer to the 6/20 riddle might not be the most important, important as it would be. But I went no farthur except to say that it was apparent to me the minute I saw Hunt before the Ervin committee that he considered he had an ongoing deal.

And at one point im our discussing my proposal I said it would cost less than adding a new member to the staff, that my terms, keeping my work going under decent conditions, which would include all I had and all I would do, would come to less than today's Guild rate. My point here was not to tempt him, for he has no power, but to enbale him to be an advocate. To this I added that there were two homes for the stuff now, without naming the state a state historical society and a small local college.

In summary, I would guess that the weakness in the prospects lies in Elfin's reluctance to take a chance with his own positions, seeing that he would be in some way responsible in the minds of his superiors if anything went wrong.

This is an odd position because they would be checking anything they want to check. I did not comment on this but anticipating it address it elliptically. Among the things I did was say that my files indicate all my sources, all dates, and the documents I have are still associated with my sources (in their envelopes). I said that when everything is public-the real hangup and my real .roblem- there can be no doubt.

By weakness I mean over and above what I did initiate discussing, the unusual aspects of my proposal, that it just had never been done and people feared the new; that it did not involve a large cash payment, and they like to think they never paid; and that it really was rather modest, which could make it suspect.

While I was writing this, before daylight, from Chicago there was a kind of confirmation of what he had said Kalmbach is doing, in the form of a refusal to comment on the report. But I did not hear it on the radio news thereafter or on the TWO CBS net news reports on the hour. WBBM did have it on their news, as did KYW, CBS and Westinghouse, respectively.

Forgot to include in my today's memo on John Lindsay's phone call of last night that he had found my presumption that Dektor sought federal sales for PSE machines to be correct. I did not ask details and he was laughing when he told me this. I guess it is just being able to sell quantities of the machines.

2/24/74